

aggression nor invasion, and when every German is certain, as you are, that France dreams neither of revenge nor demands." When Bismarck went to Vienna in the same month to make the Dual Alliance, he explained to the French Ambassador in that city that there was nothing to excite the apprehensions of France/ " The policy of moderation inaugurated by Thiers and henceforth faithfully pursued has gradually dissipated the prejudices arising from your form of government. M. de St. Vailier and I understand each other perfectly. The relations of our countries are excellent and I have no desire except to preserve and consolidate them." In March 1880 the Emperor and Empress dined for the first time at the French Embassy. Despite these reassuring signs the Chancellor was always haunted by the possibility of a *Blanche* Ministry in France and a Franco-Russian alliance.

The sun continued to shine, however feebly, for several years. When the Powers met at Madrid in 1880 to discuss commercial and other problems in Morocco, Bismarck instructed the German representative to follow the lead of his French colleague; and when in 1881 France proceeded to establish a Protectorate over Tunis by force of arms, he afforded the moral support he had promised and received an expression of gratitude from Jules Ferry. The opening of a new phase of colonial expansion announced that she was prepared to resume her activities as a Great Power, and Bismarck frankly admitted his hopes that it would turn her thoughts from the lost provinces. It was at this moment that Flohenlohe was instructed to convey to the Foreign Minister the Chancellor's hope that France would one day realize that German friendship was of more value than a million inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine. The message was received by Barthlemy St. Hilaire with a

smile but without comment. " We desire the friendship of Germany, not her protection," he wrote to St. Vailier. The statesmen of France naturally preferred smiles to frowns, but they were aware that there were limits to the Chancellor's indulgence. "Russia is inclined to a rapprochement," explained Waddington to Freycinet in handing over the reins in 1879, " but Bismarck has his eye on us. The menace of an alliance might decide him to open hostilities." The velvet glove scarcely concealed the iron hand. " He is guided not by petty ideas of hatred and rancour," explained St. Vailier in 1881, " but by higher and more serious considerations, based on what he believes to be the interest of Germany. To attain